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Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations from the programme evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is submitted pursuant to the decision of the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking decisions on evaluations submitted to the Committee (see A/37/38, para. 362). In the present triennial review, a determination is made as to the extent to which the four recommendations emanating from the programme evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) conducted by OIOS in 2015 have been implemented. All four recommendations have been implemented.

The triennial review was conducted through: (a) a review and analysis of biennial progress reports on the status of recommendations of OIOS; (b) an analysis of relevant information, documents and reports; (c) a survey of UN-Women staff; and (d) interviews with UN-Women staff.

In recommendation 1, UN-Women was requested to develop theories of change for its key strategic issues. UN-Women implemented the recommendation by developing 12 flagship programming initiatives that were aligned with its strategic plan and linked to its operational work, thus more closely aligning its country-level programmes with its corporate strategic priorities and impact areas. A specific theory of change was developed for each initiative to help UN-Women to identify the actions and strategic partnerships required to achieve transformative change, as a result of

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which 78 per cent of survey respondents indicated that strategic plans at all levels included clear theories of change articulating the organization's direction and 62 per cent reported that country strategic notes were at present better aligned with regional notes and the corporate strategic plan.

In recommendation 2, UN-Women was requested to enhance the synergies and linkages between its two subprogrammes. UN-Women addressed the recommendation by revising its programme and operations manual in 2016 to enhance the synergies between its two subprogrammes and by developing a results management system, a web-based platform to directly connect the two subprogrammes, resulting in better sharing of information between the subprogrammes and among country offices. It also developed guidance notes to harmonize work-planning across the organization. While most UN-Women staff surveyed (57 per cent) stated that the lessons learned were used to inform planning across the two subprogrammes, most were of the view that synergies between them needed to be improved further.

In recommendation 3, UN-Women was requested to strengthen communication and coordination between its headquarters and field offices. UN-Women addressed the recommendation by revising the terms of reference of its senior management team. The team now invites regional directors to attend selected meetings and ensures that the Director of the Programme Division gives regional directors access to the minutes of such meetings. The terms of reference of UN-Women thematic advisers were reviewed, highlighting the roles and functions of the advisers in providing support to the field on the organization's thematic normative work. A web-based community of practice was established as a platform for the sharing of relevant knowledge and resources on gender equality and the empowerment of women. While UN-Women staff interviewed at headquarters believed that coordination between headquarters and the field had improved because of those measures, field staff reported that more needed to be done to strengthen linkages between headquarters and field offices, particularly with regard to guidance from regional thematic advisers.

In recommendation 4, UN-Women was requested to clarify complementarities with its United Nations partners. To implement the recommendation, UN-Women commissioned a corporate evaluation of its contribution to United Nations system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women in May 2016 that made several recommendations on how to increase complementarities. Furthermore, UN-Women co-chaired the programme working group on the revision of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidelines, and through the process ensured the implementation of relevant normative frameworks for gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN-Women also increased its participation and coordination role at the country level, and during the 2015–2016 period the number of United Nations joint gender programmes grew by 28 per cent, becoming the first area of concentration of joint programmes.

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fifth session, in 2015, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) (E/AC.51/2015/9).

2. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the report and highlighted the timeliness of the evaluation in view of the continuing debate on the post-2015 development agenda and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Committee noted the success of UN-Women in its normative work and commended the progress achieved in various areas, including in relation to the Commission on the Status of Women and other intergovernmental processes. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 64–67 of the report of OIOS.

3. In the present triennial review, OIOS examines the status of implementation of the four recommendations contained in its evaluation report. The present report also provides a discussion, where possible, of the extent to which the implementation of the recommendations has contributed to programme changes.

4. The methodology for the triennial review included:

(a) A review and analysis of biennial progress reports on the status of recommendations, which are monitored through the database of the OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division;

(b) An analysis of relevant information, documents and reports obtained from UN-Women on various issues related to the recommendations;

(c) An electronic survey of a non-random sample of 101 UN-Women staff, comprising senior managers and headquarters staff, regional directors, thematic advisers and country representatives, conducted in December 2017, which yielded a response rate of 38 per cent;

(d) Interviews conducted by telephone with a non-random sample of UN-Women senior managers and technical staff based at headquarters.

5. The report incorporates comments of UN-Women received during the drafting process. A final draft was shared with UN-Women for its final comments, which are provided in the annex to the present report. OIOS expresses its appreciation for the cooperation and assistance provided by UN-Women in the preparation of the report.

II. Results

6. UN-Women was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/289 as a composite entity with a normative, operational and coordination mandate, and it became fully operational on 1 January 2011. In its evaluation report, OIOS noted that UN-Women had made significant strides in advancing the global normative agenda for women's rights and that its unique added value was its singular focus and authority on women's rights. OIOS concluded that for UN-Women to have a greater impact, it needed to focus more strategically on gaining greater synergies from its normative and operational work and improve the ways in which it communicates about its work and about the vital role of gender equality in achieving the larger goals of the United

Nations. In that regard, OIOS made four recommendations to UN-Women: (a) to develop theories of change with respect to its key strategic issues; (b) to enhance synergies between its two subprogrammes; (c) to strengthen coordination and communication between its headquarters and field offices; and (d) to clarify complementarities with its United Nations partners.

7. All four recommendations have been implemented, and there is some evidence that the implementation of the recommendations has contributed to positive outcomes. The implementation status of each of the four recommendations is discussed below.

Recommendation 1
Develop theories of change for key strategic issues

8. Recommendation 1 reads as follows:

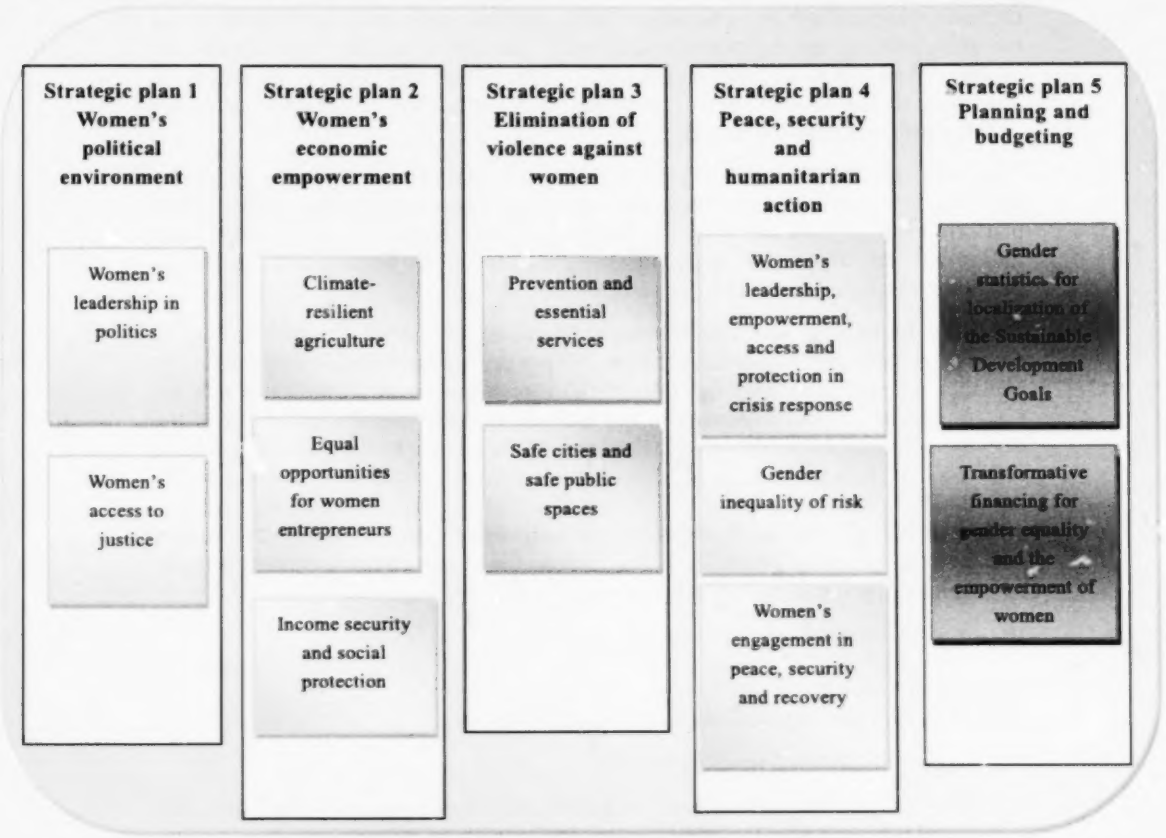
> In the context of the midterm review of its strategic plan in 2016, UN-Women should define how it will address key issues within its six impact areas. Specifically, UN-Women should develop theories of change which represent a visual road map conveying what UN-Women aims to achieve and how it intends to achieve it at the global, regional and country levels.
>
> Indicator of achievement: description of how key issues will be addressed, with accompanying theories of change.

9. The recommendation was based on the finding that UN-Women activities supporting the implementation of norms and standards were less effective than activities supporting their development, owing in part to insufficient resources and other factors beyond the direct control of UN-Women.

10. In the last quarter of 2015, UN-Women launched a process to standardize its global programming and more closely align its country-level programmes with its corporate strategic priorities. UN-Women engaged in a consultative process with all of its country offices, requesting them to outline what UN-Women was doing in the six priority areas of its strategic plan and how they could better focus and standardize to achieve better results.

11. As a result of that consultative process, 60 proposals were received from the country offices, and a meeting of all country representatives was convened to deliberate on the proposals. Twelve proposals were accepted and subsequently developed into the UN-Women flagship programming initiatives. The initiatives are aligned with five of the six strategic impact areas, as well as with the Sustainable Development Goals, as shown in figure I below. The sixth strategic priority, pertaining to UN-Women support to intergovernmental processes, including its normative and coordination functions, was mainstreamed across all five flagship programming initiatives. Each initiative was also accompanied by a corresponding theory of change.

Figure I
UN-Women flagship programme initiatives


Strategic plan 1
Women's political environment
Women's leadership in politics
Women's access to justice
Strategic plan 2
Women's economic empowerment
Climate-resilient agriculture
Equal opportunities for women entrepreneurs
Income security and social protection
Strategic plan 3
Elimination of violence against women
Prevention and essential services
Safe cities and safe public spaces
Strategic plan 4
Peace, security and humanitarian action
Women's leadership, empowerment, access and protection in crisis response
Gender inequality of risk
Women's engagement in peace, security and recovery
Strategic plan 5
Planning and budgeting
Gender statistics for localization of the Sustainable Development Goals
Transformative financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

12. It is noted in the UN-Women publication entitled "Flagship programming initiatives" that the initiatives were aimed at enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of UN-Women at the country level and ensuring that UN-Women would be "fit for purpose" for the post-2015 development agenda. In terms of "fitness", the initiatives would enable UN-Women to leverage the inherent economies of scale associated with operations; to have a universal presence through differentiated but consistent country presences; to mobilize high-quality non-core resources to complement and optimize the impact of its core resources; and to monitor and report on development impacts in a casual and transparent manner. In terms of "purpose", the initiatives would enable UN-Women to fully align and leverage its unique composite mandate (normative, coordination and operations) within the framework of United Nations "Delivering as one" initiative; to operationalize a human rights approach to development; to reduce poverty and inequality; to promote evidence-based and integrated policy development to localize and address multiple Sustainable Development Goals in a synergistic manner; to operate across the crisis-development continuum; and to support Member States in addressing global development challenges, including climate change.

13. Country offices are required to focus 80 per cent of programming and resources on the flagship programming initiatives, with the remaining 20 per cent focusing on

innovations and other country-specific programmes. In interviews, UN-Women staff noted that since the initiatives constituted the bulk of the work of UN-Women, most of which was funded from non-core resources, an increase in non-core funding would therefore indicate donor approval of that work. They noted that UN-Women non-core resources had increased from approximately $88 million in 2011 to $180 million in 2017 and attributed that positive outcome to the effective implementation of the flagship programming initiatives.

14. In 2015, UN-Women developed the results management system, an online platform for planning, monitoring and reporting. The results management system platform enables programme staff to better focus on results, with clear targets and indicators, and collates and aggregates the global results by priority area, as well as providing disaggregated data by country office and region.

15. The findings of the UN-Women staff survey supported the perceptions of positive changes, and indicated that most (89 per cent) were familiar with the results management system. Eighty per cent of the respondents were of the view that the system had led to improvements in the monitoring and reporting of results at the activity, output and outcome levels. Furthermore, 78 per cent of respondents were of the view that strategic plans at all levels had clear theories of change articulating the organization's direction, while 62 per cent said that country strategic plans were at present better aligned with regional and corporate strategic plans. The results management system platform therefore contributed to the effective management of UN-Women programming and programmes at all levels.

16. The recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 2
Enhance synergies between the two subprogrammes

17. Recommendation 2 reads as follows:

> UN-Women should further enhance the synergies between its two subprogrammes by making linkages between them more systematic, regular and, where appropriate, formal. This should build upon good practices and lessons learned from existing mechanisms in order to further strengthen communication and coordination between subprogrammes 1 and 2 in all phases of normative support work.
>
> Indicator of achievement: more systematic and regular linkages between the two subprogrammes

18. The recommendation was based on the evaluation finding of a lack of coordination between the two UN-Women subprogrammes. Subprogramme 1 includes the functions of intergovernmental support, strategic planning and inter-agency coordination, and subprogramme 2 includes the programme and policy functions.

19. One key activity in response to the recommendation was the revision of the UN-Women programme and operations manual in 2016 to enhance synergies between its two subprogrammes. The revision simplified and clarified the procedures for developing strategic notes, annual workplans and programme documents and forming programme approval committees. The revisions resulted in the establishment of a formal organization-wide annual work-planning system integrating the work of headquarters and field offices. For example, when the regional and country offices prepared strategic notes and annual workplans, headquarters staff from all divisions,

who were required to provide comments and guidance during the drafting stage, participated. Headquarters staff from all divisions were also members of a peer review group for strategic notes and annual workplans, which was convened in the context of a special session of the meeting of the extended senior management team, comprising the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director, the deputy executive directors, all directors at headquarters, regional directors, chiefs of section and heads of liaison offices. According to the 2017 guidance note for annual work-planning, peer review allows for cross-fertilization of ideas and best practices across divisions, identification of synergies, better internal coordination, validation of approaches and coordination of budgets. The involvement of all headquarters-based divisions in the regional- and country-level planning processes has created a platform for communication and coordination, thereby enabling field offices to better align their programmes with the normative work of UN-Women.

20. Furthermore, to establish a unified, organization-wide planning system, UN-Women published guidance notes for 2018 to harmonize work-planning between headquarters and field offices and provided guidance on coordinating headquarters-based annual work-planning in ways that complemented field-based planning. The guidance notes are updated annually. Annual workplans are entered in the common online results management system, facilitating information-sharing and monitoring of progress against corporate targets. The system enables all units to plan, monitor and report vis-à-vis their established outputs, activities and budgets, as well as corporate targets. Key informants noted that the reporting template included targeted relevant questions such as "How is this result linked to norms and standards?".

21. The 2018 annual guidance note on UN-Women strategic notes builds on lessons learned from previous years and was issued with the following objectives:

- Better organizational performance
- Improved internal coordination and synergies, leading to internal efficiency, savings and better value for money
- Better monitoring and reporting on results against expenditure
- Better alignment of activities with budget allocations and monitoring of resources

22. In addition, in 2017 UN-Women published a report entitled "Theory of change in support of the development results of its strategic plan, 2018–2021", which served three main purposes. It first articulated the global normative frameworks that define the conditions and actions necessary for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. Second, it described the integrated support provided by UN-Women in response to Member States' requests throughout the entire policy cycle, from global norms to national policy formulation and implementation. Third, it expanded on how each outcome of the strategic plan contributes to transformative change for women and girls and how each output represents a building block towards the achievement of those outcomes.

23. The report also outlined the synergies and linkages between the normative support functions of UN-Women and its programming work. Specifically, it is noted that through its normative support functions, UN-Women assists Member States in strengthening global norms, policies and standards across the full spectrum of the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda. Through its United Nations system coordination functions, as well as its global advocacy and partnerships, UN-Women supports the United Nations system and partners in delivering gender

equality results in their areas of focus, including by strengthening accountability to gender equality commitments, gender mainstreaming and reporting to intergovernmental bodies on system-wide activities. Through its operational activities, UN-Women provides targeted integrated policy advice to Governments, upon their request, and supports, as appropriate, social mobilization and capacity development to translate global norms into national policies, programmes, plans and practices. UN-Women operational activities take place in only some countries and in response to requests of Member States.

24. In interviews, staff noted that UN-Women had consistently applied lessons learned at headquarters and in the field to develop new programming. As one example, in preparation for the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, two meetings were convened at the working and executive levels involving participants from headquarters and regions and staff from all divisions to review and identify lessons learned from the fifty-ninth session. The exercise culminated in the identification of lessons that were used to inform preparations for the sixtieth session.

25. While UN-Women made efforts to enhance synergies between its two subprogrammes, the impact had not yet been experienced by all staff. Less than half of staff survey respondents (43 per cent) were in agreement with the assertion that over the past two years there had been positive synergies and communication between the two subprogrammes on normative support work, while 32 per cent said there was no positive synergy and 24 per cent did not know whether or not there was any synergy between the two subprogrammes. However, just over half of the survey respondents (57 per cent) were of the view that programme planning had improved owing to the systematic application of lessons learned.

26. The recommendation has been implemented. However, UN-Women should consider additional ways, beyond its two subprogrammes, to enhance synergies that go beyond better sharing of information and learning of lessons.

Recommendation 3
Strengthen communication and coordination between headquarters and field offices

27. Recommendation 3 reads as follows:

> UN-Women should further strengthen the existing linkages between its headquarters and field offices, including enhanced support to field offices in the implementation of the framework on gender equality and the empowerment of women, including by:
>
> (a) Ensuring the participation of regional directors in senior management team meetings where the topic(s) discussed would benefit from their direct input, and regularly sharing minutes or summaries of all such meetings with regional directors;
>
> (b) Enhancing the terms of reference of thematic advisers in the regional offices to provide more guidance to country offices on strategies and tools for implementing the normative framework, including how to use theories of change at the country level for the implementation of that framework;
>
> (c) Organizing regular regional meetings of UN-Women country representatives to share experiences in the implementation of norms and standards and draw lessons learned with a view to better informing normative support work at all levels.

Indicators of achievement:

- Inclusion of regional directors in relevant senior management team meetings and sharing of minutes or summaries
- Enhanced terms of reference of thematic advisers
- Regular UN-Women country representative meetings organized at the regional level

28. The recommendation was based on the evaluation finding that insufficient linkages between the headquarters and field offices had hampered the implementation of normative gains owing to a lack of specific and practical advice on how to translate significant normative decisions of intergovernmental meetings.

29. In 2016, UN-Women reviewed and revised the terms of reference of the senior management team in line with the recommendations of the evaluations in 2015. The revised terms of reference provide that regional directors may be invited by the Executive Director to attend selected senior management team meetings and that they should always be informed of outcomes of senior management team meetings by the Director of the Programme Division. Several UN-Women staff noted that the Entity had adopted a practice whereby regional directors were invited to attend all senior management team meetings and minutes of meetings were shared with the extended management team, which included all regional directors and headquarters section chiefs. Staff also noted that regional directors were invited to attend some Executive Board sessions in order to foster greater synergies at that level.

30. With regard to enhancing guidance to country offices on strategies and tools for implementing the normative framework, a training module on developing theories of change (part of its results-based-management package) for UN-Women work was designed and rolled out to regional advisers on strategic planning and coordination in 2015. As of March 2017, UN-Women reported that a total of 1,057 participants drawn from across the United Nations system as well as national partners had undertaken the results-based-management training based on the modules.

31. UN-Women also updated the terms of reference for its thematic advisers in 2016 in order to make them more relevant and focused on their functional responsibilities for providing thematic support and guidance to field offices. For example, the updated job description for a Policy Adviser (P-5) included the following functions:

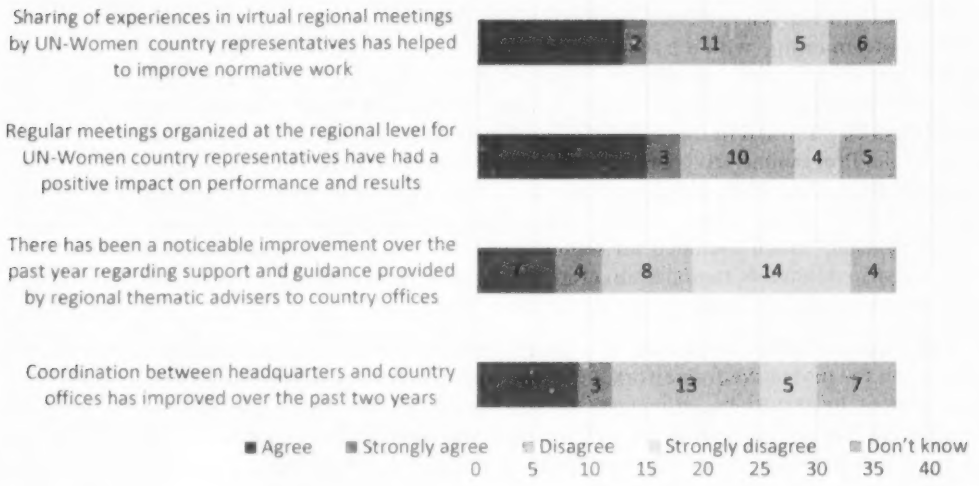
- Lead the provision of capacity-building support to country office/multi-country office teams and partners
- Lead country office and multi-country office programme teams in developing and strengthening policies, projects/programmes and modalities to support the implementation of global norms and standards and ensuring proper monitoring

32. In addition, UN-Women has established an internal community of practice to enhance knowledge management in the implementation of the Entity's United Nations coordination mandate, an intranet-based platform for sharing relevant knowledge and resources on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the United Nations system internal to UN-Women. The community of practice aims to help UN-Women to identify viable approaches to inter-agency coordination, both at headquarters and in the field, and in so doing to enhance system-wide and inter-agency coherence on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

33. While UN-Women staff interviewed at headquarters believed that coordination between headquarters and the field had improved because of the measures taken by

UN-Women, as noted above, the results of the survey, which included both headquarters and field staff, revealed a more uneven assessment, as illustrated in figure II below. This finding suggests that the intended effects of the recommendation had not yet been fully achieved, since some regions had not yet established policy advisers to effect the desired changes and field staff had not yet recognized the intended positive outcomes, particularly with regard to greater guidance from regional thematic advisers.

Figure II
Survey responses on coordination between headquarters and field offices



Source: OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division survey of non-random sample of UN-Women staff.

34. The recommendation has been implemented. However, OIOS encourages UN-Women to ensure that the new guidelines and procedures put in place have more impact with respect to its field staff.

Recommendation 4
Clarify complementarities between UN-Women and United Nations partners in implementing the UN-Women mandate

35. Recommendation 4 reads as follows:

> UN-Women should, in consultation with its United Nations partners, further clarify complementarities with regard to implementing the normative framework. Building upon existing tools, UN-Women should identify specific ways in which it can best utilize the comparative advantage of its partners to strengthen implementation of the normative framework.
>
> Indicator of achievement: clearer complementarities between UN-Women and its United Nations partners

36. The recommendation is based on the evaluation finding that UN-Women had not adequately capitalized on its United Nations partnerships to fully leverage the comparative advantages of other field-based entities to better support the implementation of normative gains (see E/AC.51/2015/9, sect. IV.D).

37. UN-Women commissioned a corporate evaluation of its contribution to United Nations system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women, which was completed in May 2016. The corporate evaluation made several recommendations, some of which complemented the evaluation recommendation, most notably that UN-Women should continue to actively engage in strategic dialogue with other United Nations entities and Member States, through existing mechanisms at all levels, to catalyse greater system coordination and coherence, particularly on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Pursuant to the findings of the corporate evaluation, UN-Women updated its theory of change for coordination with its United Nations partners. The updated theory of change outlined the key activities that UN-Women would undertake to achieve its stated outcomes, including:

- Operational coherence: harmonized and/or joint multi-stakeholder interventions by United Nations system entities to maximize results for women and girls
- Normative coherence: common United Nations system positions on gender equality and the empowerment of women, included in the evolving normative framework, policy dialogue and advocacy
- Institutional coherence: enhanced United Nations institutional capacity and accountability for gender mainstreaming and gender parity

38. Furthermore, in the context of the United Nations Development Group, UN-Women co-chaired the programme working group on the revision of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) guidelines. The revised guidelines featured gender equality and the empowerment of women as a key programming principle and outlined a minimum requirement to conduct common country assessments for quality UNDAF processes. According to UN-Women staff who were interviewed, this was a significant outcome for ensuring the implementation of relevant normative frameworks, including those for gender equality and the empowerment of women. The starting point for a common country assessment would be to identify the international norms and standards that the country had signed on to and to identify any gaps that might benefit from contributions from the United Nations system, based on its comparative advantages.

39. In November 2017, the United Nations Development Group updated its "Resource book for mainstreaming gender in United Nations common programming at the country level". That knowledge tool supports the prioritization and mainstreaming of gender equality issues in United Nations common programming processes at the country level, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2017 report entitled "United Nations Development Assistance Framework Guidance". As one example of effectively leveraging the comparative advantages of other United Nations entities in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, the 2016 United Nations Development Group information management system reported that 46 per cent of the United Nations country teams with "One Fund"[1] had allocated resources to gender equality.

40. UN-Women has also increased its participation and coordination role at the country level. The United Nations Development Group, in its 2016 results report,

[1] The 2006 report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment (A/61/583), which led to the design of the "Delivering as one" initiative, entailed the establishment of five implementation mechanisms at the country level: One Programme, One Budgetary Framework/One Fund, One Leader, One Office and One Voice.

entitled "Lift off: Agenda 2030", noted that through its Task Team on Gender Equality, co-chaired by UN-Women and United Nations Development Programme, it had made progress in implementing the mandates for more effective and coherent gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system, as set out in General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Ninety per cent of UNDAFs launched in 2016 featured a gender-specific outcome, while gender equality and the empowerment of women continued to be the most frequent area of focus for United Nations joint programmes. The United Nations country team gender scorecard was revised, updated and piloted by six country teams, in Egypt, India, Iraq, Uganda, Ukraine and Viet Nam. The tool is now aligned with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women while allowing United Nations country teams to reflect their actual contributions to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5, on gender equality, and other gender-related targets. The underlying methodology was strengthened to promote greater ownership and participation by United Nations country teams, including through self-assessment of progress.

41. In its report, the United Nations Development Group also noted that over the period 2015–2016, the number of joint programmes addressing gender equality had grown by 28 per cent. The increasing number of joint programmes on gender equality further illustrated how UN-Women had leveraged the comparative advantages of other United Nations entities with a greater field presence to support the implementation of a normative framework on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

42. In addition, it was recalled in the UN-Women report entitled "Coordinating for gender equality results", that gender theme groups were a major conduit, organizational framework and mobilization mechanism for joint action and better coordination of the work on gender equality and the empowerment of women at the country level. The gender theme group is an inter-agency mechanism established by United Nations country teams, which is usually led by a designated agency head to coordinate the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of issues in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women at the country level. The UN-Women staff interviewed noted that gender theme groups were the most effective and active at the country level because they had dedicated institutional support from UN-Women. In that regard, data from the 2016 United Nations Development Group information management system indicates that out of 131 countries surveyed, 62 per cent of UNDAFs had gender-specific outcomes and 51 per cent had held a capacity-building session on gender mainstreaming in the past year. This indicated that partners were prioritizing gender equality and the empowerment of women in their programmes, with UN-Women support and leadership. At the time of the present review, every regional United Nations Development Group team was supported by a dedicated working group on gender, which is tasked with promoting and supporting joint action at the regional level and assisting United Nations country teams with gender mainstreaming in the context of UNDAF.

43. The recommendation has been implemented.

III. Conclusion

44. There are indications that through the implementation of the four evaluation recommendations, UN-Women has elevated the gender equality and empowerment of

women agenda. The development of theories of change for its key strategic issues to better understand the impact of its work, as well as strengthening synergies between its two subprogrammes and communication and coordination between its headquarters and field offices, has moved UN-Women towards further harmonizing its normative and operational work. Increased clarification regarding complementarities with its United Nations partners has also contributed to greater harmonization on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the wider United Nations system. The important work of UN-Women was particularly acknowledged by the Economic and Social Council, which, in its resolution 2017/9, stated that it welcomed the important and continued extensive work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for more effective and coherent gender mainstreaming across the United Nations, and recognized its role in leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women.

(*Signed*) Heidi **Mendoza**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
March 2018

Annex

Comments from the United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

The full text of the comments received from the United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fifty-fifth session on the programme evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) is provided below. This practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

UN-Women thanks the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations from the programme evaluation of UN-Women.

UN-Women takes note with appreciation of the findings of the review and its conclusion. In particular, UN-Women receives with pleasure the acknowledgment of the Entity's efforts to further harmonize its normative and operational work, as well as the recognition of its contribution to greater harmonization on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the wider United Nations system.

In response to OIOS advice on further strengthening the implementation of recommendations 2 and 3, UN-Women is in the process of developing a knowledge management strategy to foster greater collaboration and transparency across divisions at all levels. As part of its response to the evaluation of its regional architecture, UN-Women is undertaking a functional analysis of headquarters functions to assess ways to strengthen services at the regional and country levels. This will also contribute to ensuring synergies between headquarters and field offices.

UN-Women has indeed made considerable progress in the implementation of the four recommendations and will make use of the findings and remaining recommendations emerging from the triennial review to continuously assess and improve the way in which the Entity is organized to deliver on its mandate, including in the context of its new strategic plan 2018–2021.